Thank you very much to each and every one of you for your active participation this week. In particular, I thank the many panellists, moderators and participants for the intense, rich and productive discussions and their real insights and recommendations.

This Segment has taken place in the context of staggering and escalating humanitarian needs due to protracted crises, the brutal and violent nature of today’s armed conflicts and the impacts of large-scale natural disasters and climate change. 141 million people across 37 countries- representing the tenth largest country - if they were a country with no Government - are in need of humanitarian assistance and protection and a record 65.6 million people are either refugees, asylum seekers or internally displaced people across the globe.

In this context, the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment is an essential platform where Member States and key stakeholders discuss how we will rise to meet the humanitarian challenges of today and indeed tomorrow.

We are at a pivotal time where systematic change through the implementation of the Agenda for Humanity, including of the New Way of Working, and the adoption of a strong preventative approach are being put into practice to ensure we can more effectively respond to the immense scale and scope of humanitarian challenges.

If you allow me, I would like to highlight some of the most important messages that emerged from our discussions from the past few days.

The Segment started with the transition event which links the humanitarian and development Segments. Concrete examples from Burkina Faso and the Central African Republic illustrated how the New Way of Working can serve to advance the 2030 Agenda. A major gap identified was the need for pooled, flexible financing mechanisms to enable coherent planning and prioritization at the national level.

The high-level event on famine prevention and response, co-hosted with Germany, showed the success we had so far with averting famine and how the New Way of Working is an integral part of our response. Yet, more funding and access is still needed.
It is imperative that donors back the successful and practical strategy so far and urgently deliver on their financial pledges. Equally, the international community needs to address the underlying causes of famine and find political solutions.

Discussions during the high-level panel on the promotion of respect for international humanitarian law and the humanitarian principles stressed that non-compliance and lack of access translate into lack of protection and assistance for people affected by armed conflict. The international legal framework has to be translated to action on the ground, with particular emphasis on the practicality and usefulness of the law, training and sensitization. It is also crucial to create an environment for dialogue on IHL between States, but also with non-State actors. We also underlined the importance of the active participation of women in the promotion of respect for IHL. Respect for humanitarian principles needs to remain at the core of humanitarian action.

The high-level panel on protracted crises highlighted ongoing efforts in countries such as Colombia and Ethiopia to meet people’s needs and also systematically reduce need, risk and vulnerability. The New Way of Working does not mean that we are casting aside our core responsibility—to provide principled humanitarian assistance that saves lives and protects people in the most effective way. Yet, the international community must simultaneously strengthen systems and normative frameworks that allow people to care for themselves and build meaningful futures for their families and communities. The commitment by Governments, including donors, as well as humanitarian and development actors to reduce risk and vulnerability must become the ‘new normal’, especially in protracted crises. We must seize this moment and sustain the momentum.

This morning’s high-level panel on disaster and climate change induced mobility showed that more actions must be taken to build resilience and reduce the impact of disasters. Bringing together diverse expertise and resources—including those of the private sector—is crucial, as is a whole of community approach and a whole of government approach. Partnerships with the scientific community are making great strides on advances in forecast-based financing and scenario modelling. Implementation of the Sendai Framework, the Paris Agreement and the Nansen Protection Agenda are also critical for ensuring more predictable and comprehensive efforts to limit the impact of disaster and climate change induced displacement.

During the various, high-quality side events, we stressed the crucial role of women’s leadership in the humanitarian and development spheres; the changes needed to better address humanitarian crises in urban settings; and best practices and practical ways to move from the commitments made on localization through the Grand Bargain to sustaining a changed and more efficient operational response.

This morning we looked at the progress made since the extraordinary success and significance of the World Humanitarian Summit and how the Agenda for Humanity is now the bedrock and continues to provide a vision and framework for how we can deliver the transformational change called for at the Summit. We also considered ways to
enhance the response to internal protected displacement through the New Way of Working, a key recommendation of the Agenda for Humanity.

This afternoon we recognized the significant achievements of the Central Emergency Response Fund and the Country-Based Pooled Funds in facilitating life-saving assistance to crisis-affected people. I thank the donors for their strong and consistent support, but more is needed so that these funds can live up to their potential with the necessary impact to save lives.

I very much hope that you found some time to visit the exhibitions which aimed to bring the field to you by demonstrating some critical innovations and the tools being used now in humanitarian crises to meet needs, to alleviate suffering, and to capture data.

I also commend Member States on reaching consensus on the resolution you have just adopted and the progress that has been made. I would like to thank the co-facilitators, the Philippines and Switzerland, for their excellent work.

Thank you, your Excellency, for your distinguished leadership as Vice-President of this Segment, and for Germany’s strong example and stewardship throughout the process this year.

I may also take a moment to thank the ECOSOC Bureau and the organizers of the panels, side events and the exhibitions.

And final thanks to all the staff of Conference Management, our interpreters, and sound engineers, and all the invisible hands that made this Segment possible, the ECOSOC Secretary and his team, UNOG and OCHA colleagues and all the partners who have helped to make this Segment a success.

Together everyone has laid the solid platform to deliver even better humanitarian action to the most vulnerable people on the planet - as we wish, indeed as we can, and as we must.

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